



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***FINAL DEFENDANT IN SEXUAL ABUSE CASE ON NAVAJO NATION RESERVATION PLEADS GUILTY TO AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ABUSE***

SALT LAKE CITY – The final defendant in a sexual abuse case resulting from a Dec. 2, 2009, incident on the Navajo Nation Reservation, pleaded guilty to aggravated sexual abuse in U.S. District Court in Salt Lake City Wednesday afternoon.

Cynthia Bitsuie Jones, age 40, of Montezuma Creek admitted that she held the victim down on the ground while Johnson Joe, age 42, of Montezuma forcibly assaulted the victim. Jones admitted her actions caused serious bodily injury to the victim. Joe pleaded guilty to aggravated sexual assault in July, admitting he engaged in a sexual act with the victim while she was being forcibly restrained.

Michael Whitehorse, age 21, the third defendant in the case, pleaded guilty in May to abusive sexual contact after admitting he engaged in sexual contact with the victim while she was forcibly restrained.

“The plea agreements reached in this case will allow for appropriate punishment for this horrendous crime,” U.S. Attorney Carlie Christensen said. “The trauma to victims of sexual assaults is significant and long lasting. Although victims will testify if necessary, the emotional scars from a sexual assault make it difficult for them to talk publicly about the event. The resolution we have reached with these defendants means the victim will not be required to testify.”

The three were arrested in December following an investigation conducted by the FBI and Navajo Nation Criminal Investigators. The sexual assault happened in a remote area east of Montezuma Creek. The victim, left alone after the assault, was able to drive herself to a hospital. Law enforcement officers were notified at that point.

Sentencing for Whitehorse is set for Aug. 26, 2010, at 2 p.m. He faces up to 10 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. The sentencing for Joe is scheduled for Oct. 28, 2010, at 2 p.m. Jones’ sentencing is set for Jan 4, 2011. Joe and Jones, who face up to life in prison for the convictions, will undergo psychological examinations prior to sentencing.

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